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United for Quality Care

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Faye Hargrove, PCA  
New Haven  
District 1199 New England  
Before the Appropriations Committee

Good Evening Senator Osten, Representative Walker and members of the Committee, my name is Faye Hargrove and I am a Personal Care Attendant (PCA) living in New Haven. I want to share my story as a PCA so you understand how important it is to ensure PCAs like me have livable wages and benefits.

I've been a homecare worker since the 90s, when my kids were young. Today, I work 3 jobs to stay afloat, and it's not working.

Even though I'm triple vaxxed, I got COVID in October and I was hospitalized for a week. I had health insurance that I bought through Access Health CT, but the out of pocket costs were so high that now I have \$7,000 in bills. At the same time, I missed two weeks of work, and since we don't have any paid time off I lost \$1,800 in wages.

Now, I'm being harassed by creditors and even the gas company is threatening to shut off my gas. If that happens I won't have heat. If it weren't for my daughter, I'd be hungry sometimes. She helps me buy groceries. We work 365 days a year, but what do we have to show for it?

Home care services like those I provide allow people to remain in their homes while receiving the care they need. I hear all the time how important home care services are and how home care is the future, but it seems like there has been a decision by the state to underfund home care services.

The State of CT can right these wrongs. We deserve health insurance that won't leave us with thousands in debt. We deserve paid sick days so our heat doesn't get shut off when we get sick. And we deserve to retire someday instead of working til we drop.

PCAs are professional caregivers, we love our consumers, and we love the work we do. We are simply asking to be treated like human beings and receive the same security we give our consumers. Please do what is right by PCAs like me and the consumers we care for, and properly fund home care services in Connecticut.

Thank you for your time.